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Amend. Date: 2/24/2005
Reply to Office action of 1/24/2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for distributing digital works among a retail merchant having a merchant node, a remote server, and a customer at a customer node, each digital work having identification data associated therewith, the remote server being intermittently coupled through a communications link which includes a communications network to the customer node, the method comprising the steps of:

storing the digital works and their associated identification data on a memory of the remote server;

purchasing from the retail merchant a package including a card associated with a desired one of the digital works, wherein the package card includes a package card identifier, the package card identifier being displayed on an outer surface of the package card, the package card identifier being a code that includes the desired digital work's identification data to uniquely identify the digital work and the package and card being purchased, the outer surface of the card or the package further displaying a description of the content of the digital work to be downloaded;

sending a request from a merchant node associated with the retail merchant to the remote server to set a status of the desired digital work as available for one-time access based on the package card identifier of the package card associated with the digital work, the remote server receiving the request and searching the digital works stored on the remote server for the desired

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digital work specified by the package card identifier in the received request from the merchant node and setting the status of the desired digital work as available for access;

sending a request to access the desired digital work from the customer node through the communications network to the remote server, the request specifying the desired digital work's identification data included in the package card identifier displayed on the outer surface of the purchased package;

receiving at the remote server the request to access the desired digital work;

searching the digital works stored on the remote server for the desired digital work specified by the identification data associated with the package card identifier displayed on the outer surface of the purchased package card in the received request;

identifying the digital work based upon the received identification data;

transmitting the desired digital work from the remote server through the communications network to the customer node;

receiving at the customer node the desired digital work; and

storing the desired digital work on a memory of the customer node such that the digital work is available for subsequent use by the customer at the customer node after the customer logs off of the remote server.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Canceled).

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identification data for each of the digital works stored on the remote server includes a unique combination of an identifier and a

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password, and further wherein the unique combination of the identifier and the password are disposed on an inner surface of the package and sealed within the package, the method further comprising the step of:

after purchasing from the retail merchant the package associated with the desired digital work, opening the package to reveal the desired digital work's unique combination of the identifier and the password disposed on the inner surface of the package.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identification data for each of the digital works stored on the remote server includes a unique identifier, and further wherein a first portion of the unique identifier is displayed on an outer surface of the package and a second portion of the unique identifier is stored on a magnetic strip on the package, the method further comprising the steps of:

after purchasing from the retail merchant the package associated with the desired digital work, reading the second portion of the unique identifier from the magnetic strip on the package; and

printing the second portion of the unique identifier for the customer.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identification data for each of the digital works stored on the remote server includes a unique identifier, and further wherein a first portion of the unique identifier is displayed on an outer surface of the package and a second portion of the unique identifier is disposed on an inner surface of the package and sealed within the package, the method further comprising the step of:

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after purchasing from the retail merchant the package associated with the desired digital work, opening the package to reveal the second portion of the unique identifier disposed on the inner surface of the package.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
sending a request for customer registration data from the remote server through the communications network to the customer node;
inputting at the customer node the requested customer registration data;
transmitting the inputted customer registration data from the customer node through the communications network to the remote server;
receiving at the remote server the transmitted customer registration data; and
storing the transmitted customer registration data on the memory of the remote server.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications network comprises the Internet.

9. (Currently Amended) A system for distributing digital works, each digital work having identification data associated therewith, the system comprising:
a. a package associated with a desired one of the digital works, wherein the package is purchased from a retail merchant, wherein the package includes a package card having a card identifier, the package card identifier being displayed on an outer surface of the card or package, the package card identifier being a code that includes the desired digital work's identification data to uniquely identify the digital work, the outer surface of the card or package further displaying a description of the content of the digital work to be downloaded;

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- b. a communications link which includes a communications network;
- c. a merchant node used by the retail merchant, the merchant node comprising:
 - i. memory;
 - ii. a processor connected to the memory of the merchant node; and
 - iii. equipment connected to the processor of the merchant node for coupling to the communications link which includes the communications network; and
 - iv. logic for performing the steps of:
 - (1) receiving the package card identifier;
 - (2) sending a request from a merchant node through the communications network to set a status of the desired digital work as available for one-time access based on the package card identifier of the package card associated with the digital work;
- d. a customer node used by a customer, the customer node comprising:
 - i. memory;
 - ii. a processor connected to the memory of the customer node; and
 - iii. equipment connected to the processor of the customer node for coupling to the communications link which includes the communications network; and
 - iv. logic for performing the steps of:
 - (1) sending a request to access the desired digital work through the communications network, the request specifying the desired digital work's identification data included in the package card identifier displayed on the outer surface of the purchased package;

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(2) receiving the desired digital work through the public communications network; and

(3) storing the desired digital work on the memory of the customer node such that the digital work is available for subsequent use by the customer at the customer node after the customer logs off of the remote server; and

e. a remote server comprising:

i. memory;

ii. a processor connected to the memory of the remote server; and

iii. equipment connected to the processor of the remote server for coupling to the communications link which includes the public communications network;

iv. the digital works and identification data associated with each of the digital works stored on the memory of the remote server; and

v. logic for performing the steps of:

(1) searching the digital works stored on the remote server for the desired digital work specified by the package card identifier in the received request from the merchant node;

(2) setting the status of the desired digital work as available for access based upon the received request from the merchant node;

(3) receiving the request to access the desired digital work through the communications network from the customer node;

(4) searching the digital works stored on the remote server for the desired digital work specified by the identification data associated with the package card

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identifier displayed on the outer surface of the purchased package or card in the received request;

(5) identifying the digital work based upon the received identification data; and

(6) transmitting the desired digital work through the communications network to the customer node.

10. (Canceled).

11. (Canceled)

12. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein the identification data for each of the digital works stored on the remote server includes a unique combination of an identifier and a password, and further wherein the unique combination of the identifier and the password are disposed on an inner surface of the package and sealed within the package.

13. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein the identification data for each of the digital works stored on the remote server includes a unique identifier, and further wherein a first portion of the unique identifier is displayed on an outer surface of the package and a second portion of the unique identifier is stored on a magnetic strip on the package.

14. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein the identification data for each of the digital works stored on the remote server includes a unique identifier, and further wherein a first portion of the unique identifier is displayed on an outer surface of the package and a second

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portion of the unique identifier is disposed on an inner surface of the package and sealed within the package.

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 9, wherein the [[public]] communications network comprises the Internet.

16-19. (Canceled)